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ABSTRACT

Noting that there are 3,500 higher education institutions with 6,500,000 students in the European Community, four major education programs were adopted in 1987-88 by the European Council of the Commission of European Communities: (1) Erasmus, a program for student mobility; (2) Petra, a program on vocational training for young people and preparation for adult working life; (3) Youth for Europe, aimed at promoting youth exchanges within the European Community; and (4) Comett II, cooperation between universities and enterprises for training in new technologies. In addition, a proposal was made for the "Lingua" program, aimed at promoting language teaching and learning. The document contains a brief description of the chief recommendations made by the Council for further developing education. Among the major goals are to reduce unemployment as well as disparities among the least favored regions. A changing economic environment, scientific and technological changes, and identifiable lack of qualified skilled workers for the needs of the 1990s have led to an increased emphasis on the need for an educational strategy of continuing education and training throughout life. (NL)

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ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH POLICY

1987-1988

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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1987-1988

A contribution to the Standing Conference of
European Ministers for Education
Istanbul - October 1989

Abridged version, prepared for
the Commission of the European Communities,
Task Force: Human resources, education, training and youth
by the EURYDICE European Unit

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1. INTRODUCTION

1987 and 1988 have seen an unprecedented rise in the scale of Community activities and in the interest in further developing Community cooperation in the education and training field.

These activities have to be seen against the background of a Community which has made great strides forward over this period in its commitments to achieve the internal market by 1992, to strive towards its economic and social cohesion, to increase its research and development potential and to protect its environment. All these objectives form part of the Single European Act, ratified to enter into force in July 1987 and all equally imply a strategic effort from the education and training systems in the Member States of the Community.

As the Commission outlined in its Communication on "How to succeed with the Single Act" and followed through with its proposals for the reform of the Structural Funds, adopted by the Council in 1988, five key objectives need to be addressed in coordination between the Community Structural Funds, to redress inequalities within the Community. These are related essentially to reducing disparities between the regions which are least-favoured or subject to industrial decline and to reducing unemployment, whether for those who are long-term unemployed or young people, still facing unacceptable levels of unemployment. A fifth objective relates to the development of rural areas, on which subject a major report was adopted by the Commission in 1988. The capacity of the education and training systems to provide assistance for the regions and populations most in need will be at the forefront of the Community drive to ensure greater economic and social cohesion.

The imminence of 1992 has also created a climate in which Community industry in particular is reviewing its ability to respond to the changing economic environment and more generally to social and technological change. The persistence, particularly of long-term unemployment allied to the already identifiable lack of sufficient qualified workers for the skills needs of the 1990's has led to an increased emphasis on the need for a strategy of continuing education and training throughout life, both to prevent unemployment and to increase the capacity of the current and future workforce to respond to change.

The importance of access to vocational training was emphasised by the European Council, meeting at Hanover in June 1988 and followed through by an in-depth discussion at the Standing Committee for Employment in November 1988. The Chairman's Conclusions from this meeting provide an important point of reference for future work. Indeed "education and training" has been selected as one of the first priorities of common concern by the social partners, meeting on 12 January 1989 to relaunch the Social Dialogue.

This European Council also emphasised the interest of the Heads of State and Government in ensuring the recognition of qualifications in the vocational training field, an area of increasing interest following the breakthrough in 1988 reached through the adoption of a Directive to establish a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas.

The need to provide a social dimension to the Internal Market was also on the Commission's agenda in 1987 and 1988. The work of an interservice group on this issue was published by the Commission in 1988, followed by a working paper from the Commission itself, launching a debate in the various Community institutions, in the Member States and in particular with the social partners.

A concrete step was also taken towards a "Social Charter" with the Commission's request to the Economic and Social Committee to draw up a Charter for examination by the Commission.

Against this background, Commission activities in the education and training fields have only began to respond to the enormous demand for participation in programmes. COMETT and ERASMUS have been the flag-leaders of this success, targeted at the higher education sector and catching the imagination of Universities and students throughout the Community. Important advances were also made in the youth training field, with the integration of the 1985 Milan European Council's commitment to the provision of up to two years vocational training for all young people after compulsory schooling into a Council Decision establishing a programme in the youth training field (PETRA). Young people will also be given more opportunities to explore the Community in which they live following the adoption of the Youth for Europe programme, and to improve and diversify their foreign language learning, once the Commission's proposals for the LINGUA programme, presented at the end of 1988, are adopted.

The strategic importance of human resource development for the Community at large and the priority attached to this policy sector has been recognised by the Commission with the creation of the Task Force : Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth early in 1989.

This is crucial for economic success, but also as President Delors said in his January statement in the Parliament, so as to put some flesh on the Community bones and give it more soul and spirit. It is also the key factor in promoting the free movement and exchange of ideas in addition to the four freedoms (goods, services, capital and persons) provided for in the Treaty of Rome. Improved quality of education and training is essential to the pursuit of the Commission's declared priority objectives in the build up to 1992, more especially in contributing to the overall effort to promote economic and social cohesion, and in providing a strong human resources dimension to its efforts in research, science and technology.

Without investment in the present and future workforce, and their skills, versatility and entrepreneurial capacity, Europe's capacity to innovate, to compete, to create wealth and prosperity will be impaired. In this sense, education and training lie at the heart of the process of European construction.

As such education and training are necessary flanking policies which will open up new horizons for European citizens to participate in and develop the Community in the years ahead. A major new effort is required by the Community if young people are to see Europe as a collective undertaking that will shape their future, and which they in turn must create for themselves. The Commission intends to intensify its effort to involve young people more directly in projects and exchanges which give them a real experience of the European dimension and its importance for their futures.

2. SUMMARY

This document is designed to provide an overview of the many activities of the Commission of the European Communities in 1987 and 1988 in the area of education, training and youth.
A more extensive version of this report will be published by the Commission during 1989.

To summarize the main events, first of all, four new major programmes were adopted by the Council :

- **ERASMUS**, a European action programme for student mobility (cfr. 2.1.), adopted on 14 May 1987 (1).

- **PETRA**, action programme on vocational training for young people and preparation for adult and working life, adopted on 1 December 1987 (cfr. 5.2.) (2).

- **"Youth for Europe"**, programme aimed at promoting youth exchanges in the Community (cfr. 3.1.), adopted on 24 May 1988 (3).

- **COMETT II**, second phase of the COMETT programme concerning co-operation between universities and enterprises for training in the new technologies, adopted on 16 December 1988 (cfr. 2.2.) (4).

Furthermore on 21 December 1988, the Council adopted a **Directive on a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas** awarded upon completion of a minimum of 3 years of professional education and training (cfr. 2.3.) (5).

Secondly, the Commission submitted two important documents for further developing educational and training initiatives within the Community :

- a communication on **medium-term perspectives (1989-1992) in education** (6) which draws attention in particular to the potential contribution of education to the achievement of the Internal Market. The Commission will present a full medium-term programme in 1989 .

- proposals for the **LINGUA** programme (7), on 21 December 1988, aimed at promoting language teaching and learning in the Community. The Council, European Parliament and Economic and Social Committee began their examination of these proposals early in 1989.

Finally, the proceedings of the **European Parliament** as well as the growing number of written and oral questions of Members of Parliament demonstrated the importance given by the European Parliament to progress made in education and training.

3. EUROPE OF STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES

Currently, there are three thousand five hundred higher education institutions in the European Community with six million, five hundred thousand students. The enormous interest generated by the ERASMUS and COMETT programmes shows how the university world is prepared to invest in the construction of Europe.

3.1. ERASMUS

The main aim of the ERASMUS programme is to significantly increase the mobility of higher education students in the Community. This programme, adopted by the Council Decision of 15 June 1987 (1) has an estimated budget of some 85 MECU for the first three years of its implementation. It was adopted on a permanent basis showing the political commitment of the European Community to a long-term investment in inter-university co-operation.

ERASMUS represents a significant step towards the completion of the internal market and a direct response to the mandate given to the Commission and Member States by the European Council meeting held in Milan in 1985 when proposals for "the People's Europe" were adopted.

The ERASMUS programme centres on four major lines of action :

- the setting up of a European network of inter-university co-operation;
- direct financial support enabling students to spend a period of their studies in another Member State, or teachers to make short visits;
- measures to improve the academic recognition of degrees and periods of study;
- complementary measures such as the support given to university associations.

The results of the first two years of operations, 87/88 and 88/89, indicates that the achievement of a students' Europe is now becoming a reality. The amounts applied for were three times as high as those available; this shows the ever growing interest of the university world in Community co-operation and increased mobility of students and teachers.

In overall terms, since July 1987 the ERASMUS programme has provided support for :

- the participation of more than 700 institutions of higher education in Interuniversity Co-operation Programmes;

- ERASMUS grants for 16.000 students, who spent periods ranging from three months to one year studying in another Member State;

- the participation of 6.000 teachers and administrative managers in study visits in another Member State.

In addition, the Commission developed an intensive information policy on the ERASMUS programme throughout the European Community, in particular to help balance the respective participation of the various Member States. Activity Reports have been published for 1987 (8) and 1988.

The Education Council meeting on 23 November 1988, took note of the large degree of success of ERASMUS and expressed the wish that the Commission submit an amendment to the 1989 ERASMUS Decision in order to expand the programme and improve its quality over the 1991-95 period.

3.2. COMETT

The COMETT programme, adopted by a Council Decision on 24 July 1986 (9), has been implemented from 1 January 1987 for a three-year period with an estimated budget of 45 million ECU.

The programme is based on three major objectives :

- to promote a European identity, encouraging the placement of students in enterprises located in other Member States;

- to foster economies of scale for joint training programmes between universities and enterprises at transnational level with a view to combatting specific skills strategies resulting from rapid technological change;

- to stimulate the exchange of experience between Member States in the field of university/industry co-operation in training.

The COMETT programme aroused considerable interest in industry and university circles in the twelve Member States and the financial assistance requested far exceeds the available resources. Over the first two years of operations, 1987 and 1988, 1320 projects were granted financial aid from the over 4000 submitted. These cover the following elements :

- 125 "University-Enterprise Training Partnerships" (UETPs);
- 2.400 transnational placements for students in enterprises in other Member States;
- 120 transnational fellowships for staff of universities and enterprises;
- 210 joint continuing training projects;
- 100 multilateral initiatives for the development of multimedia training systems.

In the light of the success of the first phase of COMETT a second phase, COMETT II (1990-1994), was adopted by the Council on 16 December 1988 (4) with an estimated budget totalling some 200 million ECU. A Commission proposal for the opening of COMETT II to EFTA countries is now under review by the Council. As part of a more proactive approach and an intensification of the response to training requirements of enterprises in the technological field, the objectives of this second phase are the following :

- to increase the supply of advanced training at local, regional and national levels;
- to provide a European dimension to university-enterprise co-operation in initial and continuing training in the new technologies and their application;
- to encourage the joint development of training programmes and exchange of experience;
- to raise the level of training to respond to social and technological changes;
- to better pinpoint changing requirements of qualifications and advanced training sectors.

3.3. Recognition of higher education degrees

The Community Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres (**NARIC**) received support under the ERASMUS programme for the development and improvement of its operation.
Furthermore, an important initiative is due to be launched in 1989/90 in the Community, known as the European Course Credit Transfer System (**ECTS**). Its overall objective is to develop a codified system of transferable credits between the universities in the twelve Member States to try to solve the problems of academic recognition and facilitate student mobility. Five disciplines were selected (chemistry, medicine, history, mechanical engineering, business management) and all the Community higher education institutions were asked to express their interest in the first six-year pilot phase of the project. 81 higher education institutions and three consortia will take part in the pilot phase within the "inner circle". An "outer circle" has been formed to receive information on developments, consisting of institutions from the 464 applications who were not selected for the "inner circle".

Another important breakthrough was achieved, with respect to recognition for professional purposes, with the adoption of the **Council Directive on the general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas** awarded following at least three years of professional education and training on 21 December 1988 (5). This Directive will make a major contribution to the achievement of the Internal Market, when it comes into force in 1991.
It is based on the principle of mutual confidence, and differs from previous "sectoral" Directives in certain important respects.

- it is a general system, and applies to all regulated professions for which a University training of at least three years is required, and which are not the subject of a specific Directive (i.e. doctors, dentists, architects etc.)

- recognition is based on mutual trust, without prior harmonisation of the training courses for the different professions.

- as a basic principle, a Member State may not refuse access to a regulated profession to a national of another Member State holding the requisite qualification for the exercise of that profession in another Member State.

Following these developments the Commission is currently examining the possibility of an extension of this system to other levels of qualifications and the need for more general measures to improve the transparency of the Community labour market.

3.4. Other activities

In addition, a large number of activities involving exchanges of information have been taking place between the Member States in the higher education field with publications such as the **"Student Handbook"** broadening the scope of information available to the student population.

Finally the **European University Institute** at Florence continued its activities in 1987 and 1988 with more than 200 students-researchers.

4. TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S EUROPE

4.1. "Youth for Europe"

On 24 May 1988, the Council (3) adopted this programme for a 3-year period (1989 - 1990 - 1991) with an estimated budget of 15 MECU.

"Youth for Europe" should involve some 80.000 young people in the Community and its main objectives are the following :

- to promote improvements in the quality of youth exchanges in the Community for an increasing number of young people from all the Member States;

- to encourage the diversification of these exchanges and reach a balance between the Member States;

- to support European activities aimed at developing links between young people and youth groups of the various Member States.

This programme is more particularly directed towards young people who experience difficulty in participating in such exchanges due to their social, cultural or geographical origin.

This programme provides support for the following actions :

- direct support for exchanges of at least one week between young people from 15 to 25 years old and for youth exchange infrastructure;

- short study visits for the organisers of youth exchanges and assistance for training courses;

- setting up of national agencies for the coordination of the programme.

In 1987 and 1988, before the programme was adopted, the Commission financed youth exchanges within the Community (some 8.500). The Commission has also taken steps to strengthen links with the Youth Forum of the European Communities, which is also an observer on the Youth for Europe Advisory Committee.

The Third Joint Programme for the **Exchange of Young Workers** continued in 1987 and 1988 with the participation of approximately 7.000 young people. This programme is aimed at offering young workers or job seekers (from 18 to 28 years old) training and experience through living and working in another Member State for a short (up to 3 months) or long (up to 16 months) period.

The objectives of the period spent abroad by the young worker are :

- to promote vocational training;

- to integrate into the working world of the host country;

- to develop understanding of the European Community.

In 1987 - 88, almost half the participants were job seekers. The Commission launched an assessment of the programme and its impact on the young workers who had participated. An interim report was published by the Commission in July 1988.

4.2. Language learning

Knowledge of foreign languages is a key factor in the cultural, economic, technical and scientific co-operation between European citizens, in the creation of a People's Europe as well as in the achievement of the Internal Market in 1992.
On 24 May 1988 the Council and Ministers of Education drew Conclusions on the basis of a report from the Education Committee and a special group of experts, which underlined the quantitative and qualitative inadequacy of language teaching in the Member States.

Therefore, on 21 December 1988 the Commission proposed the **LINGUA** programme (7). This programme, intended to run for a period of five years (1990 - 1994) with a budget estimate of 250 million ECU, contains two principal objectives :

- to increase the ability of Community citizens to communicate through a quantitative and qualitative improvement of the teaching and learning of foreign languages;

- to enable the current and future work force to acquire an adequate level of knowledge of foreign languages to enable firms to take full advantage of the Internal Market.

The programme includes the teaching of all official languages of the Community as foreign languages.

The LINGUA programme defines a set of common principles for the Member States in the foreign language field, as well as a series of Community actions aimed at supporting and reinforcing the implementation of such principles.
The common principles require in particular the intensification of language teaching in the education systems, the improvement of communicative skills, the diversification of language training provision and an increase in the motivation to learn languages.

The Community actions cover four major areas :

- promotion of language training for young people (exchanges of pupils, continuing training of teachers, teaching materials);

- reinforcement of the European university network and development of the initial training of teachers (as part of the ERASMUS programme);

- language teaching promotion in economic life;

- development of complementary measures to promote innovation.

With respect to **the languages and cultures of regional and ethnic minorities,** the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on 30 October 1987 (10).
The Commission has continued to support pilot experiments in bilingual education and information exchanges in conjunction with the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, based in Dublin.

4.3. The European dimension in schools

A Resolution was adopted on this subject by the Council and the Ministers of Education at their meeting on 24 May 1988 (11). The Resolution seeks to increase young people's information and understanding about the European Community through a series of practical measures. Member States were invited to make the necessary provisions concerning school curricula, teaching materials, teacher training and contacts between students and teachers of different Member States. Two important Conferences were held in Maastricht on this topic. One of them brought together national officials and members of non-governmental organisations and the other involved head teachers from the twelve Member States. The Commission maintained its support for projects by non- governmental organisations in this field.

Furthermore, nearly 2.800.000 maps of the Community were produced for primary and secondary schools by the Commission.

There are now nine European schools in operation in the Community, catering primarily for children of officials from the Community institutions, and awarding the European Baccalaureate.

4.4. The education of migrant workers' children

As part of its Action Programme in the field of Education, the Commission has organised a series of **pilot experiments**, colloquia and meetings of experts in this area. There are now fifteen pilot experiments supported by the Commission, which focus on :

- improving the integration of migrant children at all levels of the education system;

- the development of curricula and materials for the teaching of the language of origin;

- the reception of migrant children when they return to their countries of origin;

- teacher training.

Spain and Portugal set up pilot projects in 1987, which means that all "countries of emigration" of the Community are now involved in the teaching of mother tongue languages and cultures.
An evaluation of these projects is currently under way. The final report will be submitted in 1989.
Furthermore, three European symposia took place in 1987 and 1988 on this topic.

In addition, a second report on the implementation of the 1977 Council **Directive** (12) was adopted by the Commission. This Directive defines three main obligations for host Member States where migrant children are concerned : to provide a free tuition to facilitate reception, comprising especially suitable teaching of the official language of the host country; to take the necessary measures for teacher training to this end; to promote the teaching of the language and culture of origin.

At their Council meeting on 23 November 1988, the Ministers of Education invited the Commission to draw up a new proposal to increase the impact of pilot projects in this field, considering the evolution of the migration situation in the Community, and the need to pursue a policy of equal opportunity in the run up to 1992, for the children who constitute a contemporary European reality.

5. A BETTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD

5.1. Study visits : ARION Programme

Since 1978 the Commission has been running a scheme of one-week study visits for education administrators or specialists in other Member States. The objective of the programme is to improve links between education systems and to put up to date and high quality information at the disposal of policy makers and practitioners.
This programme was discussed by the Committee of Education in October 1987 and various alterations were made in 1988/89 to improve its operation : planning of visits, an increased number of topics, more resources to carry out 600 study visits per year, a better exploitation of the results (reports and seminars).

5.2 EURYDICE

The EURYDICE network was created in 1980 and has been pursuing its information activities on education within the European Community. The demand for information concerning both Community and national education policies and systems has increased considerably in 1987 and 1988.

The network activities included the following :

- 200 official questions raised by the Member States over the two years entailing nearly 2.000 answers on very varied educational matters;

- in order to make maximum use of this data and to increase the rapid exchange of information, the National Units draw up basic files on each educational system with the support of the European Unit; these files are gradually integrated into the Data Base on Education which is now being computerised;

- several summary reports on education in the twelve Member States were produced and broadly disseminated;

- "EURYDICE Info" is now being published and circulated twice yearly and provides regular information on education policy in the Community; in addition, the European Unit sent out more than 100.000 papers which had been requested;

- the European Unit continued its technical assistance for the development of the EUDISED thesaurus managed jointly by the Commission and the Council of Europe.

In the area of statistical data, the European Communities Statistical Office (OSCE) published a document in 1987, "Europe in figures", presenting basic statistical data on the Community with illustrations targeted on young people of 16 - 18 years of age.

5.3. Teachers

Given the importance of the teaching profession for the quality of education in the Community, teachers were the subject of Community commitments and activities in 1987/88.

Firstly, the Council and Ministers of Education, at their meeting on 14 May 1987 adopted Conclusions on the **in-service training of teachers** (13). A series of concrete case studies were carried out by the Commission as a follow-up to the Summer University held in Madrid in July 1987 and the work culminated in the holding of a seminar in Thessalonica in November 1988. A study on the in-service training of teachers in the twelve Member States of the Community was largely disseminated with the support of the EURYDICE network.

Secondly, the comparative study of the **conditions of service of teachers**, financed by the Commission and the Dutch Ministery of Education, has been available in Dutch, French, English and German since June 1988.

Thirdly, the Commission gave its support to some activities of the European Teachers' Trade Union Committee (ETTUC) and the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE).

Finally, in March 1988 the Commission presented a Communication specifying its position with regard to article 48-4 of the Treaty of Rome. According to this position, only a small number of public employees are covered by the exception to free movement contained in the Article. Consequently, teachers should enjoy the right of free movement.

5.4. Other exchanges of experiences

Three seminars for national decision makers in education were held in 1987 and 1988.
The first seminar took place in June 1987 in Brussels and focused on the content and goals of basic education. The second was held in Hanover in June 1988 and dealt with the teaching of economics as part of general education.
Finally, in June 1988 representatives from the 12 Member States took part in a very rich exchange of views in Madrid. The planned national educational reform was presented by the Spanish authorities.

In the course of the two years there have been many exchanges of information in other forms. The list would be too long to present in detail. However Commission aid to the European Parents' Association (EPA) is worth mentioning (this association groups 70 national parents' associations) as is the assistance provided to the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Community (COFACE).

6. A PRIORITY : THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL INSERTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

6.1. The conclusions of ten years of work on the transition of young people from school to working life

The Council and Ministers of Education, at their meeting on 24 May 1988, took note of the final report of the Commission on the second programme for the transition of young people from education to working life (14). The Council invited the Member States to develop strategies following the main conclusions of the report, in particular in the following fields :

- links between schools and the world of work;
- organisation of a continuing and consistent guidance processes;
- reduction of school failure and early drop-outs;
- in-service training of teachers and school projects;
- positive measures to promote equal opportunities between girls and boys;
- parents' participation.

1987/88 was dedicated to appraising and disseminating the outcome of the programme at the local/regional, national and Community level. A series of top level conferences was held (seven in total) to present the work and the pilot projects.

Furthermore, the Commission completed and published a series of thematic reports on the results of the programme.

In order to fully implement these conclusions, the Council invited the Commission to put forward proposals relating to the education systems in 1989.

6.2. Vocational Training of Young People and the PETRA programme

On 1 December 1987, the Council adopted a **Decision on the vocational training of young people** and their preparation for adult and working life (2). This Decision mentions the Member States' commitment to "ensure that all young people in the European Community, who so wish, should have one year or, if possible, two years or more, of vocational training following their compulsory education".
The **PETRA** programme, set up in pursuance of this Decision aims to support the Member States in the implementation of vocational training policies for young people, in complement to the European Social Fund.

This programme contains three fields of activities :

- a European network of training initiatives (linked or twinned) so as to encourage transnational partnerships and provide technical assistance;

- initiatives or information projects managed by young people themselves;

- co-operation in the research field.

In 1988, a first sample of 150 projects was presented by the Member States and accepted by the Commission to set up the European network. Furthermore, nearly 160 youth initiative projects were funded in 1988 by the Commission. These projects were managed by young people themselves and aimed at developing their entrepreneurial skills.

7. TOWARDS A QUALIFIED WORK FORCE

7.1. Continuing training of adults

On 14 January 1987, the Commission adopted a Communication on **Adult Training in Firms** (15). This Communication consisted of :

- a review of the importance of continuing training as part of the firms' development plans;

- suggestions to develop integrated strategies for industrial training;

- an analysis of the respective roles of public sector and private agencies;

- proposals for future Community action.

1988 was devoted to a more in-depth analysis of law and practices in each Member State and to the initiation of a series of consultations within Community institutions as well as with all partners involved in training at the national and Community level. In addition, the Standing Committee on Employment, which groups representatives of the twelve governments and social partners' organisations in the Community in their session of 25 November concentrated on continuing training and reacted a broad degree of agreement. The conclusions of the Presidency highlighted three major issues :

- a definition of the functions of continuous training (adjustment, promotion, prevention);

- agreement on a series of common guidelines which should direct the implementation of national policies;

- an appeal to the Commission to submit an action programme with a view to a better understanding on the part of all actors concerned, creating partnerships and transfers of expertise and evaluating practices and progress.

For **Small and Medium Enterprises**, the Commission adopted an experimental training programme in December 1988.

The programme has three strands :

- training of heads of SMES in strategic management in view of 1992;

- setting up of sectoral and local structures to improve information for the heads of SMES on the implications of 1992;

- incentive actions, especially networking training projects, co-operation between training institutes, training for heads of SMES in merger strategies and support for large enterprises and banks to play a role in training the heads of SMES.

It will be implemented from the beginning of 1989 in conjunction with more general initiatives in the field of continuing training.

The co-operation programme between **residential centres for** continuing education **and training of adults** funded a total of 77 transnational training seminars over these two years.

7.2. Education and training in the new information technologies

On the basis of the Resolution of the Council and Ministers of Education, at their Council meeting of 19 September 1983, on **"measures relating to the introduction of new technologies in the school systems"**, a work programme was adopted for 87-88 focusing on the training of teachers and trainers and the development of educational hardware and software.

The EURYCLEE network set up in 1986 is now operational for exchange of information in this field with one or two centres per Member State.

Various publications were issued, mainly handbooks for teachers on the introduction of the new technologies in primary and secondary schools.

Co-operation with international bodies was reinforced through the participation of the Commission in the extension of the Eudised thesaurus on the new technologies together with the Council of Europe; the Commission also participated in various UNESCO meetings on this subject.

As part of the 1987-1988 work programme, six summer universities and several seminars were organized under Commission sponsorship. A special meeting was held for young people from all the Member States in the United Kingdom. A European Symposium for decision-makers, held in Portugal in December 1987, was the opportunity to draw up a first balance sheet of the work done at Community level since 1983.

In December 1988, the Commission drew up a full report on progress achieved in this field at national and Community levels. The report will be submitted to the Council early in 1989.

Where vocational training is concerned the **EUROTECNET** programme has been expanded in 1987 and 1988. The main features of the programme are as follows :

- a European network of innovative demonstration projects in the field of initial and continuing vocational training;

- a concerted research programme on the adaptation of training to meet the needs of technological change;

- a programme of exchanges and visits.

The network now covers 135 projects and was strengthened with the addition of projects from the new Member States and the creation of a sectoral dimension focusing on projects in the construction sector.
One of the main objectives of EUROTECNET is the transfer of promising innovations to vocational training professionals in the Community. To this end, thirteen national dissemination conferences were held with the support of the Commission.

In addition, a team of experts is now testing a prototype instrument for evaluating adult training software.

The second phase of the EUROTECNET programme is being prepared. The Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, a statutory tripartite Committee set up in 1963, with representatives of the governments, employers and trade-unions of the twelve Member States and the Commission, issued a favourable opinion on proposals in this area in December 1988.

7.3. Improving the access of girls and women to education and training

In accordance with the Council Resolution of June 1985 (16), a series of Community activities have taken place to promote **equal opportunities for girls and boys at school**, in three priority fields:

- sensitization of all partners involved in the educational process to equal opportunities;
- career guidance for girls, especially in technical and scientific subjects;
- teacher training.

Action research was initiated in ten Member States to stimulate the interest and participation of girls in educational activities related to New Technologies. A poster competition was organised in four Member States. The Commission also supported seminars, research programmes and stock-taking of innovations. A report on the progress made in this field was drawn up by the Commission in December 1988 and will be submitted to the Council in 1989.

In May 1987, the Social Affairs Council approved the guidelines contained in a Commission Communication on **Vocational Training for Women** (17). The objectives to be pursued include overall promotion of women's access to vocational training and their participation in specific training fields in which they are under-represented.

A network of demonstration projects on the vocational training of women, **IRIS**, was launched officially at a European Conference at the end of 1988.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION

8.1. Activities directed towards socially disadvantaged populations

A report from the Commission on progress achieved in **the fight against illiteracy** was adopted by the Council and Ministers of Education, at their meeting on 14 May 1987 (18).
In this context, in 1988, the Commission set up and supported 17 action research programmes in the Member States aimed at preventing illiteracy.

These action research programmes cover all levels of the education systems (pre-school, primary, secondary) as well as training for young people and adults. They provide a framework for the promotion of an active partnership between researchers and practitioners.

In addition, a symposium of national decision-makers and a summer university provided opportunities to discuss Community cooperation and exchanges of experience in this field.

The study funded by the Commission on the education of gypsy and travellers' children was complemented by studies covering the new Member States and translated (available in French, English, Italian, Spanish and German).
A new study concerning the education of other categories of **children whose parents have no fixed abode** (rivercraft, circus and fair people) will be available in 1989.

The first Community action programme on the fight against **long term unemployment** was launched by the Commission. In October 1988 following discussions with the Advisory Committee for vocational training, concentrating on an evaluation of education, training and counselling measures in this area.

8.2. Disadvantaged regions

In accordance with the Council Regulation of March 1984 (19), **Greece** receives from the Community exceptional financial aid in the social field.
With respect to training, this support is concentrated on the construction of vocational training centres in the Athens area.

A specific programme of assistance for the industrial development of **Portugal** (PEDIP) was approved by the European Parliament following a proposal from the Commission in December 1987 and confirmed by the European Council in February 1988.
One of the priority areas concerns the establishment of stronger foundations for initial and continuing training (in the industrial field).
Preparatory studies were carried out on the transition of young people from school to working life; vocational training and rural development; technological training and industrial development; development of career guidance structures in vocational training.

In addition, from January 1987 to June 1988, the **European Regional Development Fund** financed 56 projects for training and education infrastructure in least-favoured regions of the Community (76 MECU).

8.3. The European Social Fund

In 1987 and 1988, the European Social Fund interventions continued in the context of a difficult employment situation. Although the level of employment rose slightly, unemployment continues to affect both young and old and increasingly concentrate on the most disadvantaged groups on the employment market.
The amount of assistance provided during these two years rose to almost 6.300 MECU of which 75% was in favour of projects for young people of less than 25 years of age.
The reform of the "structural funds" provides for a concentration of effort on the five principal objectives mentioned in the introduction.

8.4. Rural development

Rural development is a high priority in the Community. A Commission report on this topic indicates the importance of maintaining education and training infrastructure in the rural areas, as a key factor for development as well as the adjustment of training programmes to the requirements of the rural world (20).

On-going work relating to education and training is concentrating on a review of the quality and quantity of education and training opportunities in rural areas and identifying innovative experiments.

8.5. The integration of the disabled into normal schools

The Council and Ministers of Education at their meeting on 14 May 1987, adopted Conclusions on a programme of European co-operation in the educational integration of handicapped pupils (21).

This four-year programme has four major themes :

- the relationship between special education and integrated situations in normal education;
- teacher training and parent participation;
- development of educational curricula and methods;
- study of social and physical barriers to the integration of the disabled.

These activities are part of a broader programme, HELIOS, adopted in April 1988 by the Council and aimed at the social and economic integration of the handicapped (22).
20 projects concerning school integration were provided with financial support within a network of exchange of experience.
Another network has been created for activities in the area of employment, vocational training and retraining.
The two newsletters currently produced will be combined into one single publication called HELIOS.

9. OTHER ADVANCES IN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING FIELD

9.1. Comparability of vocational training qualifications

With the technical assistance of CEDEFOP, the Commission continued its work on the implementation of the Council Decision of 16 July 1985 on comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States, which provides an important contribution to one of the major objectives of the Treaty of Rome : the free movement of workers.

In 1987 and 1988, the expert groups set up for each specific sector a complete review of qualifications in six sectors :

- hotels and catering;
- car repair;
- construction;
- agriculture;
- electricity/electronics;
- textile/clothing.

The work of these groups on the first two sectors was the subject of mutual agreement between the Member States, as required by the Council Decision. Approval of the work in the other sectors should be agreed in 1989, and work is also being launched in new sectors within the expert groups.

9.2. CEDEFOP

In 1987 and 1988, CEDEFOP activities focused on the following :

- information and documentation;
- publications;

- updated descriptions of vocational training systems;

- comparability of vocational training qualifications (cf. 9.1.);

- study visits for vocational training specialists;

- forum of research institutes.

In addition, publications were produced on six priority research areas :

- projects in the Mediterranean countries;

- initial and continuing training of the unemployed;

- development of qualifications, the organisation of work and training;

- use of the new technologies in initial and continuing training;

- the training of teachers and trainers;

- vocational training in the context of local development.

9.3. Sectoral developments and co-operation outside the Community

- In 1987, several projects on vocational training for **sea fishing** were funded; training sessions were held by the Commission for training trainers on the prevention of accidents in this sector.

- In the field of **tourism**, an exchange scheme for trainees has been operational since February 1988. It will cover some 300 trainees, and is aimed at providing additional practical training to students in the hotel and restaurant sector.

- More than 90 young European executives have benefited from an intensive 18 month training programme in **Japan**. After their experience within this programme, European export business leaders will be in a better position to establish or expand their business in the Japanese cultural and economic context.

- Links were fostered with the **People's Republic of China** in the field of vocational training.

- Finally, in the context of the **Lome Convention** (II and III), the Commission supported many education and training projects in ACP countries.
  Co-operation was also promoted with developing countries in Latin America.

10. OTHER CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES

10.1. Health and safety education

At their meeting on 23 November 1988, the Council and Ministers of Education adopted a Resolution concerning health education in schools (23). This Resolution is aimed at supporting interdisciplinary measures for health education at all levels of the educational system; this support will be implemented through exchanges of experience and teaching materials as well as pilot projects.

10.2. Environmental education

At their meeting on 24 May 1988, the Council and Ministers of Education adopted a Resolution on environmental education (24). The objective of this Resolution is to raise public awareness with regard to environment problems through education and training.
Vocational training projects in the environmental field were funded with a budget provided on the initiative of the European Parliament.

10.3. Consumer education

A symposium was held on this topic in May 1988 in Madrid. In addition, the Commission supported pilot experiments for consumer education for young people in several Member States.

10.4. Relations with international organisations

Co-operation has been maintained in 1987 and 1988 with international organisations involved in education, training and youth affairs : the Council of Europe, OECD, UNESCO, the Nordic Council and ILO. In addition, for EFTA countries in particular, the Commission proposed their participation in the COMETT II programme.

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Eurydice
The Education Information Network in the European Community

Educational cooperation in the Community

The educational systems in Community countries vary considerably and this variety, which is the result of historic and cultural factors, itself constitutes a great wealth which should be preserved.
On the other hand it is in the interest of everyone to draw benefit from the experiences and projects of partner countries within the Community.

Educational policy makers in the European Community have long been aware of the value of information concerning innovations and changes introduced in other Member States in order that their own decisions might be well founded on the knowledge of alternative possibilities of practice, and the Member States agreed to promote close cooperation in the field of education at Community level.

In February 1976 the Council of the European Communities and the Ministers of Education adopted an action programme in the field of education. They agreed among other things to set up an information network in order to increase and improve the circulation of information in the area of education policy*.
This information network, known as EURYDICE, is designed therefore to underpin the developing programme of educational cooperation within the European Community.

The Education Committee of the European Community, which has the task of coordinating and monitoring the action programme, recommended that the use of Eurydice should in the first phase be limited to those in policy making positions. The Education Committee consists of representatives of the Member States and of the Commission.

In accordance with their own distinctive education structures, each Member State has designated at least one National Unit to participate in the network and the Commission of the European Communities has arranged with the European Cultural Foundation the establishment of the Eurydice European Unit, which is part of the network and assists the Commission's Education Service.
Eurydice is based on the mutual cooperation of the National Units and the European Unit. In addition the latter coordinates and animates the network.

* Official Journal n°C38, 19.02.1976, P1

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